

“This announcement is another indication that we are making progress in our fight for water,” said Costa. “For too long, extreme environmentalists and Valley outsiders have stood behind bad science to hang our local economy out to dry. Revising these flawed biological opinions is a shot to our critics’ agenda which includes cutting off our water, no matter how much it hurts our Valley’s jobs and way of life.”

Costa has long pushed for revisions to the rulings that punish the Valley in the name of protecting endangered fish while all but ignoring much of what is actually killing the species. He called the announcement a move in the right direction.

“I have long said that the biological opinions are not using the best available science,” added Costa. “Integrating these flawed regulations will finally allow us to take a more commonsense and comprehensive approach to California’s water challenges. This is good news for our Valley’s farmers, workers and communities who depend on reliable water deliveries. It’s also positive for the fisheries that rely on a healthier Bay Delta. I will continue to monitor this process to ensure that all factors affecting the Delta are considered, and that the challenges facing the Valley are fully addressed.”

The goal of the near-term strategy is to incorporate new science into the process for implementing the biological opinions in water year 2011. Longer term, the plan calls for development of a single, integrated biological opinion based on a joint science program that encompasses Interior’s FWS, U.S. Geological Survey, and Bureau of Reclamation; Commerce’s NMFS; as well as state scientists. The integrated biological opinion will address the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and water project operations.

The new plan grew out of a March 19 National Academy of Sciences assessment of the two separate biological opinions. For more information on the National Academy of Sciences study and Rep. Costa’s response to the preliminary assessment, [click here](#).

Last year, Costa introduced HR 2977, a bill directing the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a comprehensive study of sustainable water and environmental management in the Bay Delta. Costa also joined Senator Feinstein’s efforts to initiate the National Academy of Sciences study on reviewing the two biological opinions.